

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 25-49 are pending in this application, Claims 43-48 having been previously withdrawn; Claim 36 having been currently amended; and Claim 49 having been added. Support for amended Claim 36 can be found, for example, in the original claims, drawings, and specification as originally filed.¹ No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 25 was provisionally rejected under nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting; Claim 36 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 25, 26, 28, 30-34, 39, and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Letemps et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,562,750; hereinafter “Letemps”); Claims 27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Letemps in view of Sugawara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,837,026; hereinafter “Sugawara”); Claim 35 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Letemps in view of Aratani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,735,646; hereinafter “Aratani”); Claim 37 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Letemps in view of Yoshizawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,698,243); Claim 40 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Letemps in view of Honjo et al. (JP2000-281367; hereinafter “Honjo”); and Claims 38 and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Letemps in view of Aratani.

With regard to the non-statutory double patenting rejection, a terminal disclaimer can be filed, if the claims in the present application remain obvious in view of the claims of the cited U.S. patent application at the time of allowance of the present application. Furthermore, additional amendments (if needed for allowance of these claims) may eliminate the double-patenting rejection, making the filing of a terminal disclaimer at this time premature. Indeed,

¹ See page 4, lines 13-16 of the specification.

M.P.E.P. § 804.02(IV) states that, prior to issuance, it is necessary to disclaim each one of the double patenting references applied. Hence, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned should the present amendments and arguments be accepted and should the present application be otherwise in condition for allowance. At that time, a terminal disclaimer if warranted can be supplied to expedite issuance of this case.

In response to the rejection of Claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have amended Claim 36 to correct the informality noted in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome.

In response to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and traverse the rejections as discussed next.

Independent Claim 25 is directed to a method for producing bent glass sheets including, *inter alia*:

...making glass sheets run over at least one shaping bed, for bending them, along a path with a curved profile in a run direction of the glass sheets, the glass sheets having been brought beforehand to their softening temperature, progressively giving them a desired bent shape;

wherein, between an initial bending phase in which the glass sheets begin to adopt their shape and a final phase of bending, ***continuous blowing of air is performed, at a point on the path along which the glass sheets run, onto at least one face of the running glass sheets, under conditions capable of asymmetrically influencing a final concavity of the bent glass sheets by comparison with a concavity that the final bending would have given without the blowing.***

Letemps describes techniques of bending glass sheets by passing the glass sheets over a shaping bed composed of a series of shaping rods, disposed on the path having a profile curved in the direction of travel of the glass sheets.² However, Letemps fails to teach or suggest “continuous blowing of air is performed, at a point on a path along which the glass

² See column 1, lines 11-16 of Letemps.

sheets run, onto at least one face of the running glass sheets, under conditions capable of asymmetrically influencing a final concavity of the bent glass sheets by comparison with the concavity that the final bending would have given without the blowing,” as recited in Applicants’ Claim 25.

Column 3, lines 39-52 of Letemps states:

The second and more advantageous case is that of a hot air cushion acting on the upper face of the glass sheet over substantially its entire width. This supplements the effect of gravity and, for this reason, improves the driving capability of the revolving elements of the shaping bed. For this reason, it will be possible to increase the speed of passage of the glass without increasing the risks of slipping (skating), thus enabling the speed of travel of the glass sheets to be systematically optimized as a function of the time which can be devoted to the thermal toughening. In these conditions, the speed of travel of the glass sheets will be able to reach a value of the order of 25 cm/second, which is very favorable to its optical quality.

Letemps also describes that the bending of the glass sheets is followed by thermal toughening by jets of cooling gas blown onto both faces of the glass via upper and lower nozzles.³ Lastly, Letemps describes that the hot air cushions may have a slight transverse curvature, identical to the transverse curvature which it is desired to give to the glass sheet.⁴

Thus, Letemps describes that the glass sheets can be bent using a shaping bed which includes a hot air cushion, and describes that a cooling gas can be blown onto the surface of the glass to promote thermal toughening. However, the blowing of gas on the faces of the glass in Letemps does not asymmetrically influence the final concavity of the bent glass sheets in comparison to the concavity that the finding bending would have had without the blowing of air. Letemps simply describes that the air is deposited on the glass sheets in a toughening zone in which the glass is sufficiently cooled for its shape to be fixed.⁵ Thus, Letemps fails to teach or suggest “continuous blowing of air is performed, at a path along

³ See column 4, lines 14-19 of Letemps.

⁴ See column 4, lines 39-41 of Letemps.

⁵ See column 5, lines 36-41 of Letemps.

which the glass sheets run, onto at least one face of the running glass sheets, under conditions capable of asymmetrically influencing a final concavity of the bent glass sheets by comparison with the concavity that the final bending would have given without the blowing,” as recited in independent Claim 25.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 25 (and all claims depending thereon) patentably distinguishes over Letemps. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that Sugawara, Aratani, Yoshizawa, Honjo, and Aratani fail to cure any of the above-noted deficiencies of Letemps.

In regard to the rejection of Claim 27 in view of Letemps and Sugawara, Applicants respectfully submit that this claim also patentably defines over the above cited references. Claim 27 recites that “the blowing of air is performed on just one side with respect to the axis along which the glass sheets run.” Page 4 of the outstanding Office Action acknowledges that Letemps does “not teach blowing air on only one side of the sheet with respect to an axis.” In an attempt to cure the above deficiency, page 5 of the Office Action asserts that Sugawara describes “blowing air on a bent glass sheet on a portion of the glass sheet, for instance one side of the glass sheet to selectively cool that portion of the glass sheet.” However, Sugawara has nothing to do with bending. In Sugawara, the corners of the glass are cooled differently to create stresses and not to bend the glass.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 27 is patentable.

In regard to the rejection of Claim 31 as anticipated by Letemps, Applicants respectfully submit that this claim is also patentable. Claim 31 recites that “the air blown is **cold enough** with respect to a bending temperature for the blowing to have an influence on the final bending.” Thus, in Claim 31, cold air influences the bending of the glass. In contrast, column 3, lines 55 of Letemps describes that “[t]he term **hot air** is to be understood

here as meaning air raised to a temperature relatively close to the bending temperature of the glass sheets.” (Emphasis added).

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 31 is patentable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 be withdrawn.

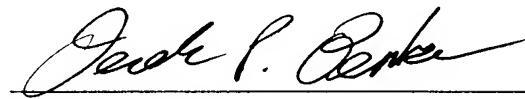
In order to vary the scope of protection recited in the claims, new Claim 49 is added. New Claim 49 finds non-limiting support in the disclosure as originally filed, for example in original Claims 25, 27, and 31.

Therefore, the changes to the claims are not believed to raise a question of new matter.⁶

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, and in light of the above discussion, the pending claims as presented herewith are believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁶ See MPEP 2163.06 stating that "information contained in any one of the specification, claims or drawings of the application as filed may be added to any other part of the application without introducing new matter."